

Nalco Docket No. 7777
Customer No. 00049459

REMARKS

35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) Rejection

Claims 1-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Trokhan (U.S. Patent No. 5,073,235) in view of Wicks (4,483,745). More specifically, the Examiner states the following:

Trokhan fails to disclose that the belt is impermeable. Wicks discloses a papermaking system where a transfer belt is arranged between a press section and a drying section and wherein the transfer belt is impervious (Wicks, Figures 1,3). It would have been obvious, to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time when the invention was made to combine the teachings of Trokhan and Wicks, because such a combination would provide for an improved transfer of the web as disclosed by Wicks.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection.

Trokhan discloses a process for improving the life of papermaking belts containing a cured photosensitive resin. Specially, Trokhan describes how the mechanical application of chemicals to a papermaking belt surface can increase the life of a papermaking belt that comes in contact with a paper web. Trokhan teaches that the chemical can be applied to the surface of a papermaking belt surface that comes in contact with a paper web, preferably at the point when the belt is temporarily not carrying a paper web. In addition, Trokhan also discloses the use of belt cleaning showers that serve to clean the papermaking belt of any paper fines, adhesives, etc.... Trokhan further teaches that on the papermaking belt, the embryonic/paper web will be subsequently deflected, rearranged, and further dewatered. The paper-web contacting surface of the papermaking belt contains a plurality of conduits making it not impermeable. Trokhan also discloses that there are vacuum sources along the papermaking belt's inner or unexposed surface, which assist in dewatering a paper sheet.

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Wicks discloses a method and mechanism for positive web transfer in a press section of a papermaking machine including an intermediate press nip formed between first and second press members with a porous felt on one surface of the web and a nonporous looped smooth surface belt of nonextensible material impervious to water passing through the nip in direct contact with the other surface of the web. The Wicks reference teaches that the impervious belt prevents rewetting of a sheet when carried on a belt and serves to transfer the paper web to another press nip or press dryer.

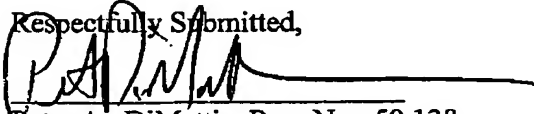
Applicants traverse the Examiner's rejection because a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Trokhan with Wicks. More specifically, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to apply belt conditioning techniques for permeable belts to impermeable belts. Permeable and impermeable belts are two distinct types of belts. The prior art does not teach or suggest that conditioning permeable and impermeable belts are similar to one another. Therefore, the only possible motivation to combine these references comes from hindsight reconstruction and that motivation is not permissible. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner remove this basis rejection and allow claims 1-22.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully assert that all pending claims in this application are in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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